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Turning the tide: Student teachers and pedagogical perspectives of multilingual primary schools in Scotland

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Abstract

Preparation for teaching in Scotland requires students to work towards a number of standards which specifies the range of professional knowledge, understanding and values that trainee teachers should work towards during their programme of study. One of the twenty-four benchmark statements requests students to demonstrate their ability to respond appropriately to socio-cultural and linguistic differences among children and young people. However, as students enter the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme they are constrained by their lived experience and view of the world. That is to say, in the Scottish educational context, overriding assimilationist ideologies means English monolingual discourses prevail. In order to seek insights into pre-service teachers' attitudes and responses towards multilingual classrooms a questionnaire was administered to students participating on the postgraduate primary education programme at the University of Edinburgh. The findings revealed that whilst students appreciated children's bilingual skills, they also held a number of misconceptions regarding additional language learning. Also to emerge from the data was an overwhelming response that mainstream schools were not considered to be the place to develop minority children's first languages. Finally some suggestions are made as to how teacher education can adequately prepare prospective teachers for the linguistically diverse nature of the schools in which they will work and the children and young people they will support.

Introduction

According to the latest annual school census in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2009a) the number of children and young people who were identified as learning English as an additional language (EAL) rose by thirty percent from the previous year. As a result of this changing linguistic landscape multilingual classrooms across Scotland have become the norm rather than the exception. Consequently the role of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) has become critical in strengthening the capacity of student teachers in the instruction of children from minority ethnic groups. Not only do these prospective teachers need to be equipped with professional knowledge and understanding in terms of supporting individual learners' language acquisition but they also need to be informed of the existence of language inequalities as part of a wider social justice agenda for educational institutions.

Student teachers in Scotland have to work towards a framework of standards which captures a comprehensive range of professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes which students are expected to be assessed against during their programme of study as laid down by the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS, 2007). Whilst there is no explicit mention of bilingualism in the twenty-four benchmark statements, the following elements are included:

Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of equality of opportunity and social justice and of the need for anti-discriminatory practices

Demonstrate the ability to respond appropriately to gender, social, cultural, religious and linguistic differences among pupils.

All seven ITE institutions in Scotland would claim to address the above expected benchmark standards in their programmes but an overcrowded ITE curriculum and a 'no problem here' attitude means scant attention is given to features of diversity (Arshad and Mitchell, 2007; Butcher, et al, 2007).

Presently in Scotland there is no national survey to ascertain the views of trainee teachers as they embark on their first year of teaching, but there have been small-scale research studies which throw light on a teaching profession that does not feel adequately equipped to face the challenges of diverse classrooms (Smyth, 2003; SEED, 2005). Whereas in England, the Teacher Development Agency (TDA) carries out an annual survey of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) containing an explicit question about teaching children with English as an additional language. Findings show that a significant number of teachers new to the profession believed their training was not effective enough in preparing them to teach in multilingual classrooms (TDA, 2009).

In the circumstances of such apprehension a questionnaire was administered to students on a one-year postgraduate primary education programme at the University of Edinburgh to seek insights into their awareness of languages and attitudes towards language learning in diverse classrooms. The subsequent findings of this questionnaire are described in part two of this chapter. What also requires urgent attention is how Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers can make ready pre-service teachers for the rapidly changing nature of Scottish schools. This fundamental pedagogical question will be tackled in the final part of this chapter. In the meantime it is important to gain some understanding of the historical, political and socio-educational contexts of language learning in Scotland which have helped shape student teachers' lived experiences and views of the world. This is the focus of the next section.

The Scottish socio-political and educational context

Before examining the political and educational context in Scotland it is important to make explicit from the outset the distinction between the various countries that make up the United Kingdom (Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales). Since the Acts of Union between the Parliaments in both Scotland and England in 1707, Scotland has retained control and management over its educational institutions (alongside the law) and as a result the social and cultural characteristics of educational policy and practice has been historically, and continues to be, dissimilar from the ways of England and the rest of the United Kingdom (UK) (Paterson, 2003). This sovereignty is illustrated in a number of distinguishing features such as national curriculum development and implementation, testing regimes in schools and funding arrangements for supporting ethnic minority children. Particularly, the organisation and management of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) alongside the benchmark

standards which set official benchmarks on professional knowledge, skills and values required for entry into the teaching profession (cited above), are fundamentally different in England and Scotland.

The creation of a new political identity in Scotland has reinvigorated a general interest in the interwoven relationship between language loyalty, nationalism and identity formation. As such a number of policies have been introduced and initiatives implemented to maintain and regenerate both the Gaelic and the Scots language in Scotland. Meanwhile these languages have also benefited from a series of resolutions adopted by the European Union to target these indigenous languages for promotion and action (alongside other regional and minority languages such as Catalan and Basque in Spain, Sami in Finland and Occitan in France).

Gaelic is the longest-established of Scotland's languages and for a short period in the eleventh century became the language of the Crown and government after it replaced Cumbric, Pictish and Old Norse. In the medieval period Scots became the language of education and commerce, gradually replacing Latin as the language of official documents. It was not until the Acts of Union in 1707 that English became the core language of instruction in schools.

The evidence of the Gaelic revival is apparent in education which has experienced a steady expansion in the number of children, over the last thirty years being instructed in Gaelic both in primary schools and nurseries (Robertson, 2003). This is in no doubt due to a combination of substantial investment in the provision of Gaelic-medium schools and the strengthening of the legal status of the language through the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 which enshrines the rights for parents to request Gaelic-medium education for their children.

Research into attainment clearly demonstrates that children in Gaelic-immersion tend to outperform non-immersion children in literacy acquisition, and that it has positive affects on the child's English language proficiency (Johnstone, et al, 1999). This is in line with international research conducted into other language immersion programmes (Fortune and Tedick, 2008). The cognitive and personal, social and academic advantages of this type of bilingual education are the reasons put forward to explain why the proportion of children from non-Gaelic-speaking backgrounds who attend Gaelic-medium classes continues to increase (MacNeill and Stradling, 2001). This is despite criticisms of these learning institutions becoming an avenue for ambitious and professional parents to obtain a state funded elite track education where child-teacher ratios remain relatively low compared to mainstream schools. That said, the fundamental message of the intellectual benefits of this type of bilingual education is frequently lost within political and public arenas in Scotland where the debate is emotionally charged and restricted to the issue of heritage language and cultural vitality.

With the exception of Gaelic, Urdu and Chinese (taught as modern foreign languages in some secondary schools) there are presently very few opportunities available within mainstream schools in Scotland for speakers of minority languages to develop their first language skills. This policy context imposed upon schools and coercive relations of power, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) believes, is dedicated to reducing

bilinguals to monolinguals. The operating assumption of society and schools here is that children can learn English through osmosis and through this exposure to English they will find the means to become assimilated into the dominant culture, whilst the continuing use of the first language hinders their progress in English. Hence, practice based on these monolingual principles is established as axiomatic and essentially 'common sense' (Cummins, 2007: 224). The reality of this submersion system is that children face the dual task of learning a new language whilst attempting to access the curriculum through this emerging language. Children are frequently assigned to low ability groups and teachers' low expectations for these learners are confirmed through discriminatory assessments standardised on monolingual native speakers of English (Frederickson and Cline, 2002)

Very recently, some local authorities¹ have begun to employ bilingual classroom assistants and in a few cases teachers who support children in Scottish schools. Although this recruitment drive is to be welcomed the role of staff still remains one of accessing the learner's home language, in the early stages, as a means of speeding up the acquisition of English rather than continuing their first language skills as a legitimate activity in its own right. As a newly evolving area within educational establishments, bilingual support is also fraught with tensions, including the lack of status of staff and the marginalisation of teaching outside mainstream curriculum planning (Bourne, 2001).

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001) outlines the need for European citizens to be competent in at least three European languages by the end of their compulsory schooling. The proposals of the Council of Europe view this plurilingual aspiration as vital for employment and educational mobility across Europe as well as strengthening democratic participation and promoting social inclusion (Council of Europe, 2006). However, Scotland's reaction to this plurilingual objective reveals tensions between policy and practice. On the one hand, the Scottish Government's increased funding has seen the progressive lowering of the age that children are taught a foreign language in primary schools, but this change also needs to be considered in the light of a highly publicised decline in students studying modern foreign languages in secondary schools. This trend is generally blamed on the domination of English in the mass media, international electronic communications and global financial systems. As a result of this hegemony of English, there exists throughout Scottish society and schools a widespread conviction that the learning of other languages is unnecessary and the expectation that other people will speak English (McPake et al, 1999). In fact, the British (alongside the Irish and Portuguese) are the least likely of the EU states to speak another European language. This divergence from European policy and lack of motivation in language learning not only limits individual children's education in language and intercultural awareness but can also contribute to intolerance towards less prestigious non-European languages.

The aforementioned foreign-language contexts are manifestly not delivering the required level of second language proficiency and their failure is also blamed on

¹ In Scotland there are thirty two Councils with responsibility for education administered at a local level

instructional conditions. Currently there is a discrepancy in pedagogy in modern language teaching between the Primary and Secondary school sectors. A recent Inspectorate report (HMIE, 2005) questioned the standard and quality of the taught courses in some secondary schools where traditional approaches to foreign language teaching still remain and the standard of competence achieved is low. This methodology emphasises the rote learning of vocabulary and grammar and an over-reliance on testing and textbooks. This can be compared to the preferred pedagogical approach in primary schools where attempts are made to employ the extensive use of the target language in the classroom in order to produce learners with communicative competence in the language. In fact, there is a successful innovative early partial French immersion programme, in one Scottish primary school, where children are involved in content and language integrated learning (CLIL) (Johnstone, 2002), but this pedagogical approach remains relatively rare in Scotland in comparison with other parts of Europe where it is becoming increasingly popular (Eurydice, 2006).

The onset of devolution appeared to herald a new political age and one of the first Inquiries of the Education, Culture and Sport Committee was set up to investigate the role of educational and cultural policy in supporting and developing Gaelic, Scots and minority languages in Scotland. The subsequent report in 2003 made a commitment to introduce a national language strategy to guide the development and support of Scotland's languages. The aim of the strategy is fourfold: to celebrate and promote the rich diversity of languages spoken in Scotland, to raise the profile of Scotland's languages, to ensure that this rich heritage is recognised as a national resource and to encourage people living in Scotland to learn languages other than their own. However, more significantly, the latest draft document circulated for consultation in 2007 'A Strategy for Scotland's Languages' contains a kind of escape clause '*We do not bear the same responsibility for the development of other world languages which are used by communities with their roots now in Scotland*' (page 5 paragraph 5). This is an illustration of what Tollefson (1999) calls language planning 'double speak'. That is contradictory statements of celebrating, valuing, respecting and promoting all languages on one hand but clearly placing the responsibility for minority languages elsewhere. An interesting comparison here is with the comprehensive Language Strategy launched by the Welsh Assembly in 2002 where provision for teaching and learning community languages is advised where a demand exists.

Whereas, in Scotland, provision for migrant languages, where it exists at all, has been left to the initiative of minority communities and concerned parents who organise complementary schools and classes themselves in order to develop their children's heritage languages. For this reason numerous communities settled in Scotland have established their own organisations such as the Scottish Federation of Chinese Schools (SFCS). However, with minimal state funding complementary schools continue to suffer from a lack of official recognition and status (McPake, 2006). Research conducted into complementary schools in both England (Creese et al, 2006) and Scotland (Hancock, 2008) has shown how these separate sites for learning have created spaces for children to develop their first language literacy skills which, at an individual level, have the potential to be transferred to other learning contexts. Yet at an institutional level, mainstream schools have consistently failed to draw on the child's linguistic and cultural capital for educational purposes.

The establishment of a new devolved Scottish parliament has further strengthened the separate character of the nation's defining institutions and has provided greater opportunities for debating and developing new legislative frameworks. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act 2004 introduced a new framework to provide for children and young people who require additional support with their learning and for the first time includes those with EAL. The accompanying *Code of Practice* (2005) contains the following advice:

A need for additional support does not imply that a child or young person lacks abilities and skills. For example, bilingual children or young people, whose first language is not English, may already have a fully developed home language and a wide range of achievements, skills and abilities. Any lack of English should be addressed within a learning and teaching programme which takes full account of the individual's abilities and learning needs.

(Scottish Executive, 2005: 20)

This discourse clearly acknowledges that the 'funds of knowledge' (González et al, 2005) bilingual children bring to school can act as a foundation for teaching and learning. However, minimal guidance is provided on how to translate this into practice to meet the individual needs of such a diverse group of learners. This ranges from new arrivals, refugees and asylum seekers to a pool of second or third generation Scottish-born learners, many of whom speak English to their siblings at home but who still may require language support to develop their full academic potential. This somewhat naïve practice of policy makers of bracketing all EAL learners within the terms of the Act has created confusion amongst the teaching profession about this inclusive paradigm, as well as contributing towards homogeneous understandings of minority experiences. That is, it fails to take into account the full nature of children's multiple and transformative identities and their complex lived experiences with different languages and literacies (Hancock, 2006a; Harris, 2009).

Whilst experiencing placement in schools, students will also encounter a number of contradictory discourses currently being played out within political and educational forums. On the one hand, there have been moves towards embedding citizenship education within the mainstream curriculum (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2002) to encourage children and young people to actively engage in issues of social justice and intercultural encounters at a local, national and global level. In the same vein, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion's recommendations and the Scottish Government's 'One Scotland: Many Cultures' campaign recognizes the key role played by schools in promoting community cohesion (Scottish Executive, 2002; Runnymede Trust, 2008).

On the flip side, contemporary political debates have witnessed the rebranding of the concept of citizenship, in response to the challenges presented through increasing levels of diversity. The UK Government's prioritisation of a community cohesion agenda aims at countering the perceived challenges that new migrants pose to a cohesive 'national cultural identity' where differences are seen as dangerous. The result is the imposition of English language and citizenship testing for those applying for naturalisation. This construct of national identity as a political ideology sends powerful messages to edubeing played out cationalists, where citizenship

requirements are made conditional on the proficiency of the 'official' language in association with a false notion of loyalty to a 'British' identity. This covert policy of using language to legitimise or de-legitimise people only reinforces a dogma of linguistic homogeneity rather than embracing linguistic pluralism as a resource for nation-building. Hogan-Brun et al (2009: 5) argue that 'the denial of societal multilingualism fuels discourses that ignore, or reject, the very real situations created by migration'. Furthermore, the election of a Nationalist government in 2008 and the emergence of a new political climate in Scotland has added a further ingredient to this present-day political debate with further questioning of a 'sovereign' identity and the multifaceted understandings of 'Britishness' 'Englishness' and 'Scottishness'. For a more detailed analysis of cross-national perspectives of migration, language testing regimes and citizenship see Extra et al (2009).

As this brief sketch of the political context and subsequent place of language learning in Scottish education indicates, policy and provision has taken place in an eclectic fashion but mainly in the interests of English monolingualism. As students embark on their ITE programme their view of the world is constrained by this 'language habitus'. That is a system of dispositions, and unconscious ways of thinking and behaving, that individuals internalise over time as a result of their location in particular environments and sets of social relationships (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Furthermore, their ideas about teaching and learning will be institutionalised within classrooms by agreed and unquestioned ways of doing things (Bourne, 2001). This creates challenges for prospective teachers whilst on placement and their attitudes to linguistically diverse schools will be outlined in the next section.

Student teachers' attitudes to multilingual classrooms

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) for primary teachers at the School of Education, University of Edinburgh, is delivered through two types of programme: a four-year programme, leading to a Bachelor of Education degree, or a one-year postgraduate diploma programme (PGDE) for those who have completed their first degree in other disciplines. In common with the majority of practicing teachers, the students enrolled on ITE programmes at Scottish Universities are mainly white, middle-class, monolingual and (in primary schools) female ². This continues to remain unrepresentative of the communities they serve (Gaine, 2005).

The purpose of the study was to investigate how well prepared student teachers felt to face the challenge of multilingual classrooms and solicit their understandings of the diverse school contexts in which they would be working. The questionnaire was administered to the student teachers at the beginning of Postgraduate programme. It was adapted from a related study (Hancock et al, 2006b) and sent electronically to each student to gain good coverage. It may be argued that a questionnaire format is

² Ninety-two per cent of teachers in Primary schools are female and only one point one per cent of teachers are from non-white minority ethnic groups.

limited as feedback lacks depth but the deliberate use of ‘open’ questions allowed the participants space to respond in detail. Student teachers completed the questionnaires voluntarily and they were reassured of the confidentiality of their responses. Of the 250 questionnaires sent out 145 were returned – a 58% response rate. Despite the relatively low return rate sufficient questionnaires were submitted in order to ascertain similarities and differences among submissions. Three themes were inductively derived from the data including the students’ own language learning experience, their attitudes to children’s multilingualism, and their responses to linguistically diverse classrooms.

Data gained from the first question showed that students had more experience of additional language learning than the frequently applied ‘monolingual’ label would suggest. The following responses are illustrative of this:

My father is from Hong Kong and my mother from Mainland China. We spoke Hakka at home. When I was nine I went to the weekend Chinese school and learnt Cantonese. After my University degree I went to Taiwan and studied Mandarin.

I have a degree in French and Japanese. I married a Moroccan and lived in Morocco for two years and learnt Arabic.

I spent fourteen years living in Turkey as an EFL teacher. I am a fluent Turkish speaker. My six year-old daughter is also bilingual.

I am a native Welsh speaker. I received education from 3-18 through Welsh language until I moved to Scotland to attend university. I also studied French through Welsh.

I was born in West Africa and learnt French in school before moving to Scotland. I also know some Yoruba and Hausa.

Although there are an increasing number of students from minority backgrounds studying on the programme and white students with knowledge of other languages gained from living and working abroad, many of the respondents dismissed their language learning skills. For example, none of the students mentioned Scots, yet during a presentation on the programme by a Scots speaker a significant number of the student cohort claimed to speak Scots³. Furthermore, when asked if they considered themselves bilingual, statements such as ‘No I am not bilingual but I am fluent in Spanish and French’ and ‘I can speak French fluently but do not consider myself bilingual as I began learning French in High school’ were common.

The perception here is that you have to speak two languages from birth and it also requires native-speaker type competency to be considered bilingual. For example, the

³ Despite achieving official European recognition in 2001 the standing of the Scots language continues to be subject to fierce debates among linguistics and teachers, some of who perceive Scots as nothing more than slang or an inferior form of standard English, unfit to be used in the classroom for educational purposes.

students gave a range of responses to their definition of bilingualism including 'immersion in two languages from birth'; 'fluency and ability to switch languages with ease'; 'using both languages equally and with confidence'; 'being able to think and dream in another language'; and 'ability to understand nuances jokes and cultural references'. Whilst the students valued children's bilingual skills, as giving them an advantage in life, they failed to take into account the quotidian multilingual worlds that children live in and their changing identities reflected through varied proficiencies and allegiances to different languages and literacies (Gregory, 2008).

When asked about what languages are important for schooling it was not surprising that English was unanimously considered the most important followed by the major European languages (French, German, Spanish). A typical response here includes:

Our role within Europe becoming so important French, German and Spanish will be vital.

Interestingly, Chinese was also considered important by a high number of students. Comments such as 'Chinese would be more helpful these days' and 'Chinese for business purposes' were common. This is indicative of the fact that the status of languages in education is frequently determined by fashionable ideologies. In this case, China's emerging position of strength within global economics and trading systems has resulted in Scotland's Strategy for Stronger Engagement with China (Scottish Executive, 2006). This ten point plan includes references to the development of Chinese language learning in schools but the incentive seems to be unashamedly to be motivated by the generating of 'significant new opportunities for wealth creation' rather than the educational benefits of bilingualism.

An analysis of the questionnaire data also highlighted a number of other misconceptions about the role of learning and language in the home. For instance, whilst recognizing that the family's first language should still be spoken in the home, many of the students felt the exclusive use of this language would inhibit the child's acquisition of English as the following views reveal:

Try to expose them to as much English as possible by having friends to play with and ask parents to speak English occasionally.

Make sure English is given an equal weighting with the other language.

I would advise the parents to speak 30 minutes of English every evening at home.

At least try to speak English if they can as it will be useful for schoolwork.

To continue speaking the home language but also speak English, for example, after dinner or for a certain time during the day or all weekend.

Frequently, the child's bilingualism was conceptualised as a potential problem rather than an asset. The common advice given by the students was to encourage more

spoken English in the home if the child was experiencing difficulties in class, regardless of the parents' proficiency in this language, as these responses suggest:

I would encourage practising English, especially if they are struggling. They could speak it after dinner or all weekend.

Encourage the speaking of English as well especially where homework is involved. It depends on whether the child is struggling or not.

Encourage them in both English and the home language but don't allow it to exclude or disadvantage them in anyway from their peers.

This echoes research conducted by Smyth (2003), who investigated the dominant discourse of primary school teachers in the west of Scotland, and showed that teachers' construction of pedagogical practices was perceived exclusively in terms of English. Furthermore, there was also a perception that minority parents who spoke a language other than English at home would inhibit their child's acquisition of English. Smyth asserted that these taken-for-granted practices are based on long established cultural mindsets that believe that bilingual children have to lose their first language in order to succeed in the educational system.

A number of students emphasized the difference between new arrivals and those in the class who had conversational fluency in English. A typical submission was as follows:

It depends how long the children have been in school. The children who speak good English will not need any help.

The assumption here is that children with surface fluency do not require further support. What is required is a deeper understanding of the rationale behind Cummins' (2000) progression between BICS (Basic interpersonal communicative skills) and CALP (cognitive and academic language proficiency processing). This has implications for future instructional practices where differentiated support may be necessary to develop learners' cognitive and academic language processing skills in context reduced situations in order to access the curriculum and achieve their full potential (Mohan et al, 2001).

The students were also asked if they thought the child's first language should be developed in mainstream schools. A number of interconnected reasons were cited to counteract this notion of language rights and entitlement. The assumptions underlying the students' views require unpacking and counter arguments are outlined below. First, over-capacity and lack of space within a crowded curriculum was a common concern as the following responses indicate:

I understand that the national curriculum already puts a lot of pressure on the timetable as it is and learning languages may not be considered a priority.

Yes there should be but it is a crowded curriculum.

No this would take up too much time and resources.

It is a valid complaint that neo-liberal politics within current educational reform have seen a move towards more control and direction of teachers' professional work where schools are 'marketed' on their attainment levels. The result for teachers has been less autonomy and moves towards a more prescriptive curriculum (Hunt, 2001). Whilst this close adherence to the curriculum appears to leave little space for promoting the languages of migrants this argument perceives language learning as a discrete skill only and fails to take into account the transference of concepts and skills across languages and literacies where both curricular content and language can be integrated through careful pedagogical planning.

A second reason cited by the students was the challenges of providing first language instruction given the scattered nature of the linguistic minority population and the corresponding fear of ghettoising provision. This is linked to the argument that the provision of education in the child's first language would threaten integration and community cohesion. Some of the many responses in this vein include:

No, not in Scottish schools. There are too many different languages and you can't expect to have teachers to cover them all.

No, this is idealistic. It would be virtually impossible as the school may have several pupils in it who speak different languages.

No, it is not the responsibility of the school to teach the child the language of the home. There would be too many children to cater for.

No because the language of school should be constant- the same as all pupils and there may be more than one home language in the class.

No in a multicultural society it would be impossible to teach each child in the first language. It might result in more segregation.

No it would not help to integrate people to the country they choose to live in.

The children should learn to speak English first. I don't think they should be singled out as different.

It is obvious, there would need to be a concentration of provision for certain languages in 'magnet' schools but a noteworthy comparison here is Finland- a country of a similar size to Scotland- where municipalities undertake to make provision for community language learning whenever five or more children interested in taking up such provision can be identified. If numbers count then it appears inequitable that provision is made for Gaelic-medium education when there are more speakers of Urdu resident in Scotland compared to Gaelic-speakers.

The third argument, advanced by the students, supports the submersion principle by stating that English is the exclusive language of education and dominant society as indicated below:

No, if English is never spoken in the home they will need as much interaction in English as possible to prepare them for schooling in English.

No, surely it is more beneficial for the child to be taught to communicate in the language of the country they live in.

No if they are going to live here where many people may not speak their home language it gives these individuals the extremely fortunate opportunity to become fluent in English by being immersed in that language.

No! Pupils of an ethnic minority have real trouble with their examinations because they don't have access to a fluent and rich source of English language at home.

These 'monolingual' beliefs fly in the face of well-established empirical research evidence that demonstrates that the first language has a continuing and significant role in identity formation, learning and the acquisition of additional languages. Whereas, withholding children's linguistic capital from their schooling can have detrimental effects (Bialystok, 2001; Thomas and Collier, 2002).

The final question asked students how well prepared they felt to meet the educational needs of pupils new to English during their placements. For a number of students their background gave them confidence with comments such as:

I am fortunate to have a background in EFL [working in Japan] and therefore have a lot of experience that will help me with the EAL pupils in my class. Had I not come from this background, I might not feel as well prepared to cope with the challenge of EAL in the classroom.

Not very well prepared from the PGDE however I'm lucky to have previous TEFL experience which will help me.

Whereas the majority of the students did not feel ready to meet the challenges of multilingual classrooms, making comments such as 'I need to research it more'; 'not prepared not comfortable yet' and 'I don't yet know how to do it'.

In conclusion, the findings of this small-scale study indicate that whilst students appreciated children's bilingual skills they also revealed a number of gaps in their understanding regarding additional language learning. According to Smyth (2003) teachers may implement practices that reflect broader societal attitudes without realizing it, such as internalizing normative 'monolingual' discourses where it is assumed that the more English is taught the better it is for the children and that teaching the languages of migrants in schools would disadvantage children socially and educationally.

The responsibility, therefore, of ITE in preparing prospective teachers for the challenges and dilemmas of linguistically diverse classrooms, is fourfold. First, to encourage students to explore and re-evaluate their personal beliefs and values about language awareness and identity construction; secondly, to enter into a debate and challenge the taken-for-granted language learning theories and policies handed down to teachers; thirdly, to examine how the above influences have implications for their professional practice and finally to use this new knowledge base to become agents for change. The next section contains a number of suggestions as to how these pedagogical considerations can be addressed.

Part III ITE: new directions

If, as Hall and Cajkler (2008) claim, what happens in ITE programmes is likely to have lasting impact on trainee teachers then it is imperative that teacher education takes the lead and adequately prepares prospective teachers for the rapidly changing demands of diverse classrooms. Problem-based learning (PBL) offers one route to a new pedagogy.

Since its inception as an innovation of teaching and learning for medical and philosophical students in the 1970s, PBL has attracted interest in various Higher Education contexts across the globe (Stokes, 2001). Problem-based learning is not just an instructional method but a process and an attitude that implies collaborative group enquiry in an attempt to seek potential solutions to real world problems (Bond and Feetti, 1997). That is, it envisages learning as a process of co-construction of knowledge where through sharing our understandings of the world with others, new understandings are generated. Central to this are the principles of listening to others and nurturing respectful relationships, but also a commitment to empowering students to critically reflect on their own values and beliefs.

To engage students' curiosity, it was decided at the School of Education to problematise the pre-placement sections of the programme so that theory is not communicated as fixed but open to scrutiny and challenge by students, as they grapple with the realities of school and classroom contexts. This replaces the traditional teacher-centric model where the lecturer has the knowledge and presents this knowledge in an abstract and idealized form. The process starts with the presentation of an authentic problem and students are then provided with a series of scaffolding workshop sessions and professional readings designed to promote them to think critically about new theoretical understandings and their relationship to standard classroom practice. At the end of each session students revisit and interrogate the initial 'problem' as they begin to appreciate the multiple layers of understandings of the scenario in front of them. For an illustration of such a problem containing issues of linguistic diversity refer to Young and Mary (2009) and Ehrhart et al (2010). The virtue of the PBL approach is that it encourages students to move out of their comfort zone as passive recipients of knowledge as it motivates them to think critically about the place of languages in education and gain a sense of how to deal with these everyday inequitable realities through changing their professional practice (Costa et al, 2005).

The value of this new paradigm within ITE is not without its detractors. These potential shortcomings focus on student dissatisfaction with the imbalance between academic input and collaborative dialogue, as well as the lack of rigorous assessment systems. More controversially, students may find themselves in unfamiliar territory and institutionalised learning styles mean they may be unable to engage with the issues ideologically as 'they respond to difference in terms of deficit and bring uncontested prejudices and discriminatory constructs to bear upon the issues under consideration' (Landon, 2006: 201). Despite these potential drawbacks, course evaluations of a PBL approach in ITE programmes have shown the intellectual rewards of engaging students in serious professional dialogue and reflexive thinking surrounding issues of language awareness and social justice (Young, 2006; Morgan and Wrigley, 2007).

Learning does just not involve the acquisition of knowledge and skills but at its best, learning can also be transformational. That is, the very act of learning can alter students' worldviews and the environment they work in. For example, classrooms are not only places where children learn, they are also places where aspiring teachers can learn as well. With a commitment to creating a caring ethos and listening to the learner's voice, students can gain valuable insights into individual children's linguistic and cultural capital they bring to school and then apply these intercultural insights to their own teaching practice. As Schultz et al (2008: 155) advise 'taking a listening stance implies entering the classroom with questions as well as answers, knowledge as well as a clear sense of the limitations of that knowledge'.

Whilst, it may be argued that students hardly have the power to influence the attitudes of society at large they can change classroom practices. A useful analytical tool here is Hornberger's (2004) Continuum of Bilinguality as it suggests how educators can become agents of change by moving from the traditionally more powerful monolingual context to the traditionally less powerful bi(multi)lingual context. For example, students can make choices and exercise power in a number of creative ways. They can invite parents to read stories in their home language, facilitate children to share their bilingual talents gained at complementary schools with their peers and encourage children to write and publish multilingual identity texts within the classroom. For illustrations of such projects see Kenner (2004); Cummins (2006) and Hélot and Young (2006). Students can draw on the personalised learning agenda integral to the new Scottish Curriculum (A Curriculum for Excellence) in which children have an entitlement to receive support and challenge, tailored to their individual needs, interests and abilities. In practical terms this can translate into teachers establishing local hubs using the national schools intranet service to connect isolated learners of EAL and support the teaching and learning of minority languages (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2008). The result of all the initiatives cited above, will not only raise the awareness of languages among the monolingual school population but also have a positive impact on intercultural sensitivity and education for citizenship.

Another step in the right direction within curricular reform at the School of Education, is the adoption of the National Framework for Inclusion (Scottish Government, 2009b) which views inclusion as the responsibility of all prospective and practicing teachers. The framework covers issues of poverty, culture and language in order to promote children's participation, achievement and equality. In this manner the above

issues are not taught in a tokenistic and discrete fashion but the underlying values and principles of inclusion are salient and permeate the whole of the curriculum. For an example of how the structure and content of an ITE programme for primary teachers has already been revised to ensure that social and educational inclusion is addressed within the core programme see Florian and Rouse (2009).

Whilst the main findings of the study described in this chapter are in accordance with previous research in the same field it remains a tentative start. Further insights into student teachers' attitudes and responses to multilingual schools are required including a broadening of the sample size of participants beyond the postgraduate cohort and the deployment of interviews to explore students' beliefs in greater depth. Particularly intriguing would be follow up questionnaires and/or interviews to investigate if the new programme design, outlined in this section, alters students' worldviews and if any shifting perspectives have a direct impact on their future instructional practices.

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